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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Kadra Ahmed **Hassan** (Djibouti)

I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2011, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixty-sixth session the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 38th, 40th, 41st, 47th and 48th meetings, on 1, 2, 3 and 21 November 2011. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/66/SR.38, 40, 41, 47 and 48).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/66/12);

(b) Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/66/12/Add.1);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa (A/66/321).

4. At the 38th meeting, on 1 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made an introductory statement and engaged in a dialogue with the representatives of Afghanistan, the European Union, Serbia, Kenya, Algeria, the United States of America and Morocco (see A/C.3/66/SR.38).

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II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.63

5. At the 41st meeting, on 3 November, the representative of Denmark, on behalf of Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Republic of Tanzania, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (A/C.3/66/L.63). Subsequently, Albania, Argentina, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Niger, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Zambia joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At its 42nd meeting, on 8 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.63 (see para. 13, draft resolution I).

7. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of Jordan, the United States, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq (see A/C.3/66/SR.42).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.67

8. At the 42nd meeting, on 8 November, the representative of Azerbaijan, on behalf of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Denmark, Egypt and Rwanda, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (A/C.3/66/L.67). Subsequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, India, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Togo and Turkmenistan joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

9. At its 43rd meeting, on 10 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.67 (see para. 13, draft resolution II).

C. Draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.69/Rev.1

10. At the 47th meeting, on 21 November, the representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of African States and Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa" (A/C.3/66/69/Rev.1).

Subsequently, Albania, Austria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Mexico, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

11. At the same meeting, the representative of Sierra Leone orally revised the draft resolution as follows:

(a) In the third preambular paragraph, the word "*Recalling*" was replaced with the word "*Welcoming*";

(b) Operative paragraph 11, which read:

> "11. *Recognizes* that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to support the sustainability of return and reintegration",

was replaced with the following:

> "11. *Recognizes* that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to support the sustainability of voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement";

(c) In operative paragraph 21, the words "to intensify their support" were replaced with the words "to continue and, where appropriate, intensify their support".

12. At its 48th meeting, on 21 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/66/L.69/Rev.1, as orally revised (see para. 13, draft resolution III).

III. Recommendations of the Third Committee

13. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office[1] and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its sixty-second session[2] and the decisions contained therein,

Recalling its previous annual resolutions on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since its establishment by the General Assembly,

Expressing its appreciation for the leadership shown by the High Commissioner, commending the staff and implementing partners of the Office for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities, and underlining its strong condemnation of all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel are increasingly exposed,

1. *Endorses* the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its sixty-second session;[2]

2. *Welcomes* the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[3] and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[4] and welcomes in this context the convening and facilitation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of an intergovernmental commemorative event at the ministerial level as a recognition by States of the importance of respecting and upholding the values and principles enshrined in these two instruments;

3. *Also welcomes* the important work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its Executive Committee in the course of the year, which is aimed at strengthening the international protection regime and at assisting Governments in meeting their protection responsibilities;

4. *Reaffirms* the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[3] and the 1967 Protocol thereto[5] as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime, recognizes the importance of their full and effective application by States parties and the values they embody, notes with satisfaction that one hundred and forty-eight States are now parties to one instrument or to both, encourages States not

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/66/12).
[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 12A* (A/66/12/Add.1).
[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.
[4] Ibid., vol. 989, No. 14458.
[5] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

parties to consider acceding to those instruments, underlines, in particular, the importance of full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and recognizes that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees;

5. *Notes* that sixty-eight States are now parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons[6] and that forty States are parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[4] encourages States that have not done so to give consideration to acceding to those instruments, notes the work of the High Commissioner in regard to identifying stateless persons, preventing and reducing statelessness and protecting stateless persons, and urges the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to work in this area in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and Executive Committee conclusions;

6. *Re-emphasizes* that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions, and strongly emphasizes, in this context, the importance of active international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing;

7. *Also re-emphasizes* that prevention and reduction of statelessness are primarily the responsibility of States, in appropriate cooperation with the international community;

8. *Further re-emphasizes* that protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons are primarily the responsibility of States, in appropriate cooperation with the international community;

9. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to pursue its efforts to strengthen its capacity to respond adequately to emergencies and thereby ensure a more predictable response to inter-agency commitments in case of emergency;

10. *Takes note* of the current activities of the Office of the High Commissioner related to protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, including in the context of inter-agency arrangements in this field, emphasizes that such activities should be consistent with relevant General Assembly resolutions and should not undermine the refugee mandate of the Office and the institution of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his dialogue with States on the role of his Office in this regard;

11. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to work in partnership and in full cooperation with relevant national authorities, United Nations offices and agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the continued development of humanitarian response capacities at all levels, and recalls the role of the Office as the cluster lead for protection, camp coordination and management, and emergency shelter in complex emergencies;

12. *Also encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner, among other relevant United Nations and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and humanitarian and development actors, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination,

[6] Ibid., vol. 360, No. 5158.

effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance and to contribute, in consultation with States, as appropriate, to making further progress towards common humanitarian needs assessments, as stated, among other important issues, in General Assembly resolution 65/133 of 15 December 2010 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations;

13. *Further encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to engage in and implement in full the objectives of the Delivering as One initiative;

14. *Notes with appreciation* the progress made in the implementation of the process of structural and management change, including the global needs assessment initiative, undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner, and encourages the Office to consolidate the various aspects of the reform process, including the results-based management and accountability framework and strategy, and to focus on continuous improvement in order to enable a more efficient response to the needs of beneficiaries and to ensure the effective and transparent use of its resources;

15. *Strongly condemns* attacks on refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons as well as acts that pose a threat to their personal security and well-being, and calls upon all States concerned and, where applicable, parties involved in an armed conflict to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law;

16. *Expresses deep concern* about the increasing number of attacks against humanitarian aid workers and convoys and, in particular, the loss of life of humanitarian personnel working in the most difficult and challenging conditions in order to assist those in need;

17. *Emphasizes* the need for States to ensure that perpetrators of attacks committed on their territory against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel do not operate with impunity and that the perpetrators of such acts are promptly brought to justice as provided for by national laws and obligations under international law;

18. *Deplores* the refoulement and unlawful expulsion of refugees and asylum-seekers, and calls upon all States concerned to ensure respect for the relevant principles of refugee protection and human rights;

19. *Emphasizes* that international protection of refugees is a dynamic and action-oriented function that is at the core of the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner and that it includes, in cooperation with States and other partners, the promotion and facilitation of, inter alia, the admission, reception and treatment of refugees in accordance with internationally agreed standards and the ensuring of durable, protection-oriented solutions, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups and paying special attention to those with specific needs, and notes in this context that the delivery of international protection is a staff-intensive service that requires adequate staff with the appropriate expertise, especially at the field level;

20. *Affirms* the importance of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in analysing protection needs and in ensuring the participation of refugees and other persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner, as appropriate, in the planning and implementation of programmes of the Office and State policies, also affirms the importance of according priority to addressing discrimination, gender

inequality and the problem of sexual and gender-based violence, recognizing the importance of addressing the protection needs of women and children in particular, welcomes, in this context, the series of dialogues with women and girls initiated by the Office, in this anniversary year, as an important move towards increasing understanding and improving the protection of women and girls, and underlines the importance of continuing to work on this issue;

21. *Strongly reaffirms* the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the High Commissioner of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems, and recalls that those solutions include voluntary repatriation and, where appropriate and feasible, local integration and resettlement in a third country, while reaffirming that voluntary repatriation, supported, as necessary, by rehabilitation and development assistance to facilitate sustainable reintegration, remains the preferred solution;

22. *Expresses concern* about the particular difficulties faced by the millions of refugees in protracted situations, and emphasizes the need to redouble international efforts and cooperation to find practical and comprehensive approaches to resolving their plight and to realize durable solutions for them, consistent with international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions;

23. *Recognizes* the importance of achieving durable solutions to refugee problems and, in particular, the need to address in this process the root causes of refugee movements in order to avert new flows of refugees;

24. *Recalls* the important role of effective partnerships and coordination in meeting the needs of refugees and in finding durable solutions to their situations, welcomes the efforts under way, in cooperation with countries hosting refugees and countries of origin, including their respective local communities, relevant United Nations agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, as appropriate, non-governmental organizations and development actors, to promote a framework for durable solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations, which includes an approach to sustainable and timely return that encompasses repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, and encourages States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and development actors, to support, inter alia, through the allocation of funds, the implementation of such a framework to facilitate an effective transition from relief to development;

25. *Recognizes* that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to support the sustainability of return and reintegration;

26. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts that an increasing number of States are making to create opportunities for resettlement as a durable solution, recognizes the need to increase the number of resettlement places, invites interested States, the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant partners to make use of the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement,[7] where appropriate and feasible, and, in this context, commends the efforts in launching a global

[7] Available from www.unhcr.org.

resettlement solidarity initiative in April 2011 by the Office and by those States that have responded generously in this respect;

27. *Notes with appreciation* the activities undertaken by States to strengthen the regional initiatives that facilitate cooperative policies and approaches on refugees, and encourages States to continue their efforts to address, in a comprehensive manner, the needs of the people who require international protection in their respective regions, including the support provided for host communities that receive large numbers of persons who require international protection;

28. *Notes* the importance of States and the Office of the High Commissioner discussing and clarifying the role of the Office in mixed migratory flows, in order to better address protection needs in the context of mixed migratory flows, including by safeguarding access to asylum for those in need of international protection, and notes the readiness of the High Commissioner, consistent with his mandate, to assist States in fulfilling their protection responsibilities in this regard;

29. *Emphasizes* the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a safe and humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

30. *Expresses concern* about the challenges associated with climate change and environmental degradation to the protection activities of the Office of the High Commissioner and the assistance it provides to vulnerable populations of concern across the globe, particularly in the least developed countries, and urges the Office to continue to address such challenges in its work, within its mandate, and in consultation with national authorities and in cooperation with competent agencies in its operations;

31. *Urges* all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, in a spirit of international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, to cooperate and to mobilize resources with a view to enhancing the capacity of and reducing the heavy burden borne by host countries, whose generosity is appreciated, in particular those that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, calls upon the Office to continue to play its catalytic role in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the root causes as well as the economic, environmental and social impact of large-scale refugee populations in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition, and notes with appreciation those donor States, organizations and individuals that contribute to improving the condition of refugees who remain vulnerable members of society;

32. *Expresses deep concern* about the existing and potential challenges posed by the world financial and economic crisis to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner;

33. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner to further explore ways and means to broaden its donor base, so as to achieve greater burden-sharing by reinforcing cooperation with governmental donors, non-governmental donors and the private sector;

34. *Recognizes* that adequate and timely resources are essential for the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it through its statute[8] and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions on refugees and other persons of concern, recalls its resolutions 58/153 of 22 December 2003, 58/270 of 23 December 2003, 59/170 of 20 December 2004, 60/129 of 16 December 2005, 61/137 of 19 December 2006, 62/124 of 18 December 2007, 63/148 of 18 December 2008, 64/127 of 18 December 2009 and 65/194 of 21 December 2010 concerning, inter alia, the implementation of paragraph 20 of the statute of the Office, and urges Governments and other donors to respond promptly to annual and supplementary appeals issued by the Office for requirements under its programmes;

35. *Requests* the High Commissioner to report on his activities to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

[8] Resolution 428 (V), annex.

Draft resolution II
Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 2011/263 of 28 July 2011 concerning the enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Taking note also of the request regarding the enlargement of the Executive Committee contained in the letter dated 1 March 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General[1] and the letter dated 11 July 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council,[2]

1. *Decides* to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from eighty-five States to eighty-seven States;

2. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to elect the additional members at its resumed organizational session for 2012.

[1] E/2011/75.
[2] E/2011/130.

Draft resolution III
Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969[1] and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,[2]

Reaffirming that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,[3] together with the 1967 Protocol thereto,[4] as complemented by the Organization of African Unity Convention of 1969, remains the foundation of the international refugee protection regime in Africa,

Welcoming the adoption, and the ongoing ratification process, of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa,[5] which marks a significant step towards strengthening the national and regional normative framework for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons,

Recognizing the particular vulnerability of women and children among refugees and other persons of concern, including exposure to discrimination and sexual and physical abuse, and in this regard acknowledging the importance of preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence,

Gravely concerned about the rising number of refugees in various parts of the continent,

Acknowledging the efforts of Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other stakeholders in improving the situation of refugees, and expressing grave concern about the deteriorating living conditions in many refugee camps in Africa,

Recognizing that refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, women and children are at an increased risk of exposure to HIV and AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases,

Recalling the regional dialogues that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees undertook on protection challenges and solutions with refugee women and girls in Uganda and Zambia in March and April 2011, respectively,

Welcoming the ministerial mini-summit on the humanitarian response to the Horn of Africa crisis, held in New York on 24 September 2011, the African Union pledging conference held in Addis Ababa on 25 August 2011, and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation pledging meeting on Somalia held in Istanbul on 17 August 2011, as well as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and East African Community joint summit on the Horn of Africa crisis, held in Nairobi on 8 and 9 September 2011, dedicated to raising awareness and mobilizing resources to

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1001, No. 14691.
[2] Ibid., vol. 1520, No. 26363.
[3] Ibid., vol. 189, No. 2545.
[4] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.
[5] Available from www.africa-union.org.

address the crisis in the Horn of Africa, and, in this context, expressing appreciation for the valuable contributions of countries and international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as other relevant partners,

Noting with appreciation the Joint Declaration adopted by the summit on the Horn of Africa crisis, "Ending Drought Emergencies — a Commitment to Sustainable Solutions", which, inter alia, expressed concern about the mass exodus of refugees into neighbouring countries, as well as the increased number of internally displaced persons due to the current humanitarian crises of drought and famine in the Horn of Africa,

Noting also with appreciation the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in 2006,[6] and its instruments, in particular two of the protocols to the Pact, which are relevant to the protection of displaced persons, namely, the Protocol on the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons,

Acknowledging with appreciation the generosity, hospitality and spirit of solidarity of African countries that continue to host the influx of refugees due to recent humanitarian crises and protracted refugee situations and, in this regard, expressing particular appreciation for the commitment and efforts of neighbouring countries in the recent humanitarian crises in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the Horn of Africa, and further acknowledging with appreciation the coordination of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations as well as the continuing efforts of donors, the United Nations system, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, regional organizations, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and other partners, with regard to, inter alia, voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement, in addressing the plight of refugees during the emergency,

Recognizing that host States have the primary responsibility for the protection of and assistance to refugees on their territory, and the need to redouble efforts to develop and implement comprehensive durable solution strategies, in appropriate cooperation with the international community, and burden- and responsibility-sharing,

Emphasizing that States have the primary responsibility to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction, as well as to address the root causes of the displacement problem in appropriate cooperation with the international community,

Welcoming the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[3] and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[7] and welcoming in this context the convening, by the Office of the High Commissioner, of an intergovernmental event at the ministerial level on 7 and 8 December 2011 to commemorate these anniversaries,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General[8] and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[9]

[6] Available from www.icglr.org.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 989, No. 14458.

[8] A/66/321.

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/66/12).

2. *Calls upon* African Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa[5] to consider doing so as early as possible in order to ensure its early entry into force and implementation;

3. *Notes* the need for African Member States to address resolutely the root causes of all forms of forced displacement in Africa and to foster peace, stability and prosperity throughout the African continent so as to forestall flows of refugees;

4. *Notes with great concern* that, despite all of the efforts made so far by the United Nations, the African Union and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa remains precarious, and calls upon States and other parties to armed conflict to observe scrupulously the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law, bearing in mind that armed conflict is one of the principal causes of forced displacement in Africa;

5. *Welcomes* decisions EX.CL/Dec.629 (XVIII) and EX.CL/Dec.653 (XIX) on the humanitarian situation in Africa, insofar as they relate to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union at its eighteenth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 28 January 2011, and its nineteenth ordinary session, held in Malabo from 23 to 28 June 2011, respectively;[10]

6. *Expresses its appreciation* for the leadership shown by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and commends the Office for its ongoing efforts, with the support of the international community, to assist African countries of asylum, including by providing support to vulnerable local host communities, and to respond to the protection and assistance needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa;

7. *Notes with appreciation* the initiatives taken by the African Union, the Subcommittee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons of its Permanent Representatives Committee, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in particular the role of its Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa;

8. *Recalls* the adoption by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the conclusions on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by the Office of the High Commissioner, at its sixty-first session, held from 4 to 8 October 2010,[11] and endorses its report on the work of its sixty-second session, held from 3 to 7 October 2011;[12]

9. *Acknowledges* the important contribution of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in identifying, through a participatory approach, the protection risks faced by the different members of the refugee communities, in particular the

[10] See African Union, documents EX.CL/Dec.600-643 (XVIII) and EX.CL/Dec.644-667 (XIX). Available from www.africa-union.org.

[11] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/65/12/Add.1), chap. III, sect. A.

[12] Ibid., *Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/66/12/Add.1).

non-discriminatory treatment and protection of women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly;

10. *Affirms* that children, because of their age, social status and physical and mental development, are often more vulnerable than adults in situations of forced displacement, recognizes that forced displacement, return to post-conflict situations, integration in new societies, protracted situations of displacement and statelessness can increase child protection risks, taking into account the particular vulnerability of refugee children to forcible exposure to the risks of physical and psychological injury, exploitation and death in connection with armed conflict, and acknowledges that wider environmental factors and individual risk factors, particularly when combined, may generate different protection needs;

11. *Recognizes* that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to support the sustainability of voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement;

12. *Also recognizes* the importance of early registration and effective registration systems and censuses as a tool of protection and as a means to the quantification and assessment of needs for the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance and to implement appropriate durable solutions;

13. *Recalls* the conclusion on registration of refugees and asylum-seekers adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner at its fifty-second session,[13] notes the many forms of harassment faced by refugees and asylum-seekers who remain without any form of documentation attesting to their status, recalls the responsibility of States to register refugees on their territories and, as appropriate, the responsibility of the Office of the High Commissioner or mandated international bodies to do so, reiterates in this context the central role that early and effective registration and documentation can play, guided by protection considerations, in enhancing protection and supporting efforts to find durable solutions, and calls upon the Office, as appropriate, to help States to conduct this procedure should they be unable to register refugees on their territory;

14. *Calls upon* the international community, including States and the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to take concrete action to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons and to contribute generously to projects and programmes aimed at alleviating their plight, facilitating durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons and supporting vulnerable local host communities;

15. *Reaffirms* the importance of timely and adequate assistance and protection for refugees, returnees and displaced persons, also reaffirms that assistance and protection are mutually reinforcing and that inadequate material assistance and food shortages undermine protection, notes the importance of a rights- and community-based approach in engaging constructively with individual refugees, returnees and displaced persons and their communities so as to achieve fair and equitable access to food and other forms of material assistance, and expresses concern in regard to situations in which minimum standards of assistance are not met, including those in which adequate needs assessments have yet to be undertaken;

[13] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/56/12/Add.1), chap. III, sect. B.

16. *Also reaffirms* that respect by States for their protection responsibilities towards refugees is strengthened by international solidarity involving all members of the international community and that the refugee protection regime is enhanced through committed international cooperation in a spirit of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing among all States;

17. *Further reaffirms* that host States have the primary responsibility to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, calls upon States, in cooperation with international organizations, within their mandates, to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection and, in particular, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or the activities of armed elements or used for purposes that are incompatible with their civilian character, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue efforts, in consultation with States and other relevant actors, to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of camps;

18. *Condemns* all acts that pose a threat to the personal security and well-being of refugees and asylum-seekers, such as refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks, calls upon States of refuge, in cooperation with international organizations, where appropriate, to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection, including the humane treatment of asylum-seekers, notes with interest that the High Commissioner has continued to take steps to encourage the development of measures to better ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue those efforts, in consultation with States and other relevant actors;

19. *Deplores* the continuing violence and insecurity which constitute an ongoing threat to the safety and security of staff members of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian organizations and an obstacle to the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Office and the ability of its implementing partners and other humanitarian personnel to discharge their respective humanitarian functions, urges States, parties to conflict and all other relevant actors to take all measures necessary to protect activities related to humanitarian assistance, prevent attacks on and kidnapping of national and international humanitarian workers and ensure the safety and security of the personnel and property of the Office and that of all humanitarian organizations discharging functions mandated by the Office, and calls upon States to investigate fully any crime committed against humanitarian personnel and bring to justice the persons responsible for such crimes;

20. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner, the African Union, subregional organizations and all African States, in conjunction with agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community, to strengthen and revitalize existing partnerships and forge new ones in support of the protection system for refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons;

21. *Calls upon* the Office of the High Commissioner, the international community and other entities concerned to continue and, where appropriate, intensify their support to African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities, including training of relevant officers, disseminating information about refugee instruments and principles, providing financial, technical and advisory services to accelerate the enactment or amendment and implementation of legislation relating to refugees, strengthening emergency response and enhancing

capacities for the coordination of humanitarian activities, in particular those Governments that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers;

22. *Reaffirms* the right of return and the principle of voluntary repatriation, appeals to countries of origin and countries of asylum to create conditions that are conducive to voluntary repatriation, and recognizes that, while voluntary repatriation remains the pre-eminent solution, local integration and third-country resettlement, where appropriate and feasible, are also viable options for dealing with the situation of African refugees who, owing to prevailing circumstances in their respective countries of origin, are unable to return home;

23. *Also reaffirms* that voluntary repatriation should not necessarily be conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions in the country of origin in order not to impede the exercise of the refugees' right to return, recognizes that the voluntary repatriation and reintegration process is normally guided by the conditions in the country of origin, in particular that voluntary repatriation can be accomplished in conditions of safety and dignity, and urges the High Commissioner to promote sustainable return through the development of durable and lasting solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations;

24. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide financial and material assistance that allows for the implementation of community-based development programmes that benefit both refugees and host communities, as appropriate, in agreement with host countries and consistent with humanitarian objectives;

25. *Appeals* to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, to the third-country resettlement needs of African refugees, notes in this regard the importance of using resettlement strategically, as part of situation-specific comprehensive responses to refugee situations, and to this end encourages States, the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant partners to make full use of the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement,[14] where appropriate and feasible; and, in this context, commends recent efforts by the Office of the High Commissioner in launching a Global Resettlement Solidarity Initiative in April 2011 and by States that have responded generously in this respect;

26. *Calls upon* the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum as well as internally displaced persons, where appropriate;

27. *Urges* the international community, in the spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, to continue to fund generously the refugee programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the substantially increased needs of programmes in Africa, inter alia, as a result of repatriation possibilities, to ensure that Africa receives a fair and equitable share of the resources designated for refugees;

28. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner and interested States to identify protracted refugee situations which might lend themselves to resolution through the development of specific, multilateral, comprehensive and practical

[14] Available from www.unhcr.org.

approaches to resolving such refugee situations, including the improvement of international burden- and responsibility-sharing and the realization of durable solutions, within a multilateral context;

29. *Expresses grave concern* about the plight of internally displaced persons in Africa, notes the efforts of African States in strengthening the regional mechanisms for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, calls upon States to take concrete action to pre-empt internal displacement and to meet the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, recalls in that regard the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[15] takes note of the current activities of the Office of the High Commissioner related to the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, including in the context of inter-agency arrangements in this field, emphasizes that such activities should be consistent with relevant General Assembly resolutions and should not undermine the refugee mandate of the Office and the institution of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his dialogue with States on the role of his Office in this regard;

30. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons to continue his ongoing dialogue with Member States and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, in accordance with his mandate, and to include information thereon in his reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum, under the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions".

[15] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.